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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/10/06

SPONSOR Nava LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Transfer Articulation Program SB 598

ANALYST Earp

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY06	FY07		
	\$148.8	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 598 appropriates \$148,840 from the general fund to the Higher Education Department (HED) for the maintenance and operation of the New Mexico Transfer Articulation Program.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$148,840 contained in this bill would be a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2007 shall revert to the general fund. Information provided by HED indicates these funds would support 1.5 FTE positions and associated costs to fully implement the provisions of the Post-secondary Education Articulation Act established pursuant to Senate Bill 161 of the 2005 legislative session. These funds would augment the operational budget for the department that is included in the General Appropriation Act.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The Post-secondary Education Articulation Act (Sections 21-1B-1 through 6 NMSA 1978) establishes state requirements for transferability of academic courses among New Mexico institutions of higher education, including the development of a 35 hour transferable General Education core and transfer modules in various academic disciplines. Section 21-1B-6F states that:

“The general education core, the discipline module for business and early childhood education and the common course numbering and naming system for all courses in those modules shall be effective by spring semester 2006, and the printed materials of all institutions shall conform to the system by fall 2006. A minimum of three additional discipline modules shall be effective not later than fall semester 2007 and an additional three discipline modules by fall semester 2008.”

This legislation would provide additional resources to the department to perform the developmental and reporting responsibilities of the Post Secondary Articulation Act.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

HED has a statutory responsibility to performing this function. The department would be responsible for defining the job descriptions of the proposed new positions, as well as recruiting and selecting the individuals to be hired.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

HED provided the following background information that may be of interest:

What is articulation?

In higher education, articulation is the process of facilitating the automatic transfer of agreed-upon courses from one public post-secondary institution to another. This means that a student can take courses at colleges and universities across the state knowing which will be accepted at other public post-secondary institutions toward completion of a degree.

How will articulation help New Mexico students?

- Articulation will define each course and course module that will transfer among public post-secondary institutions for credit toward degree completion.
- Students who pass a course with a C or better on the State Common Core matrix will not have to take it more than once.
- The number of credit hours many students take will decrease, saving them and the state money.
- The Lottery Success Scholarship and other funds will not be depleted by duplication of courses
- Two and four year public post-secondary institutions will increase their communication and cooperation.
- More students will graduate with certificates and advanced degrees from New Mexico colleges and universities

Why does New Mexico need an articulation process?

Given the geographic distances in New Mexico and the number of people living in rural areas, it is important that courses students take at two-year public colleges transfer to other two-year colleges and four-year public universities. In the past, many New Mexico students took courses lo-

cally only to find out that they were not accepted by other public colleges and universities. This resulted in the student having to take, and pay for, the same course more than once costing the student time and money.

Currently in New Mexico, many students graduate from four year public post-secondary institutions with a surplus of credit hours, which is a cost to them and the state. More significantly, only 35.6% of freshmen earn a degree within six years compared to 47.7% nationally (Improving Student Success in Postsecondary Education in New Mexico, p.6). This is due in part to the lack of articulation between public post-secondary institutions. Students often receive elective credit for transfer courses which do not fulfill specific requirements for degree completion.

What is New Mexico doing to address articulation?

Representatives from public post-secondary institutions formed an Articulation Task Force to carry out SB161. The 35 hour general education core has been determined and will form a statewide matrix that will eventually be posted on the NMHED website with links to institutional websites for advisor and student use. Three 65 hour modules representing the first two years of courses in business, criminal justice and early childhood education were developed. Three new modules will be developed each year. In addition, registrars are working to develop common course numbering and a course crosswalk between like courses and course sequences.

What will these funds be used for?

The funds will be used to create 1.5 Full-Time Employees (FTE) at NMHED to fully implement statewide articulation. This FTE will monitor course submissions from public post-secondary institutions, interact with institutions concerning questions or complaints, and conduct trainings to explain the articulation system. The half-time position will create, update and monitor the articulation website.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

HED would need to continue implementation of the requirements of the Post Secondary Articulation Act within the constraints of its existing operating budget.

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